

N.B. parents grapple with prospect of early French immersion

Description

Monday marked the final day for New Brunswick parents to decide whether they want their children in French immersion in Grade 1.

It's been a polarizing discussion since Premier Brian Gallant revealed French immersion would return to the first grade earlier in the fall.

Mother of four Connie Wheaton has two of her children in French immersion, but isn't sure if early immersion is the right call.

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New Brunswick Premier Brian Gallant is seen in this undated file photo.

"I'm struggling right now because my daughter is just learning to read, so she's just getting confident with that," said Wheaton. "That's what I'm kind of worried about is if she just starts to read and then it gets switched over to French."

Conservative Leader Blaine Higgs says there's a lot at stake. The cost of conversion and the future of its Anglophone teachers are just two issues that worry him.

"If the classroom teachers speak, surely the premier would listen," Higgs said. "All I'm asking is let them speak, and if they come out and say, 'we're fine,' I'm done. If they come out and say, 'no, no, this has to change,' then I've probably just begun."

Early French immersion is only available where numbers warrant, leaving some parents who live in rural areas to wonder if the program is something that will even be available to them.

Anglophone West School District says the deadline is tomorrow, but if there are extenuating circumstances, they're willing to reconsider that.

With files from CTV Atlantic's Laura Brown.

<http://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/n-b-parents-grapple-with-prospect-of-early-french-immersion-1.3210038>

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